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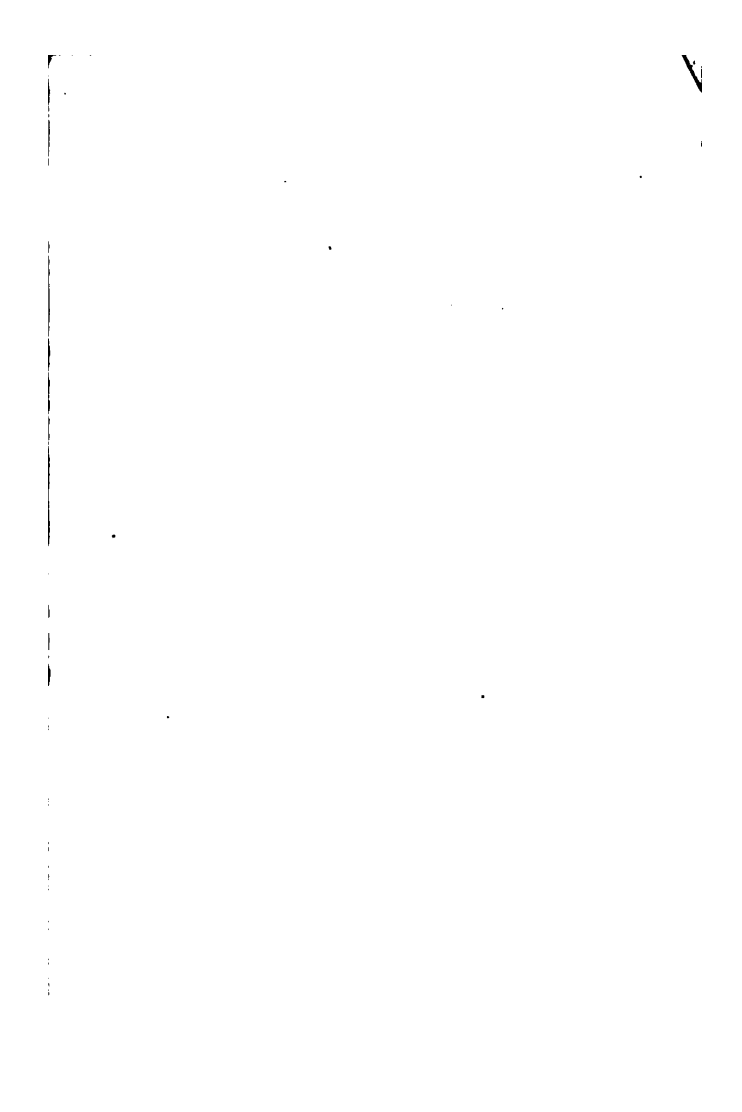
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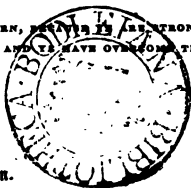
MEDITATIONS

ON

CONFIRMATION.

BY THE
REV. R. MILMAN, M.A.,
VICAR OF CHADDELEWORTH.

"I HAVE WRITTEN UNTO YOU, YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YE ARE STRONG,
AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDETH IN YOU, AND YE HAVE OVERCOME THE
WICKED ONE."—1 S. JOHN II. 14.



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C O N T E N T S.

**OUR NEED—FIRST, OF STRENGTH TO SERVE CHRIST; SECONDLY,
TO CONFESS HIM.**

THE SUPPLY OF THIS NEED.

A VISION OF CONFIRMATION.

A FORM OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

MEDITATIONS ON CONFIRMATION.

MEDITATION I.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

I. O my GOD, the eternal and unwearied GOD, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ! Where am I ? What am I ? Am not I before Thee ? Am not I in Thy presence ? In Thee I “live, and move, and have my being.”¹ “Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways.”² Thou art before me, and I am in Thy presence, yet I discern Thee not, nor see Thee.

“Behold I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him : on the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him : He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.”³ Thou hast created me for Thyself, and I cannot rest out of Thee. But between me and Thee stretches out this present world.

O my GOD, my SAVIOUR ! Thou art the FATHER of lights ; Thou art the beauty of all things

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

² Psalm cxxxix.

³ Job xxiii. 8, 9.

beautiful—the glory of all things glorious—the goodness of every good.

In Thy visible creation round about me shine forth Thine Eternal power and Godhead. On the body and the soul of man Thine own likeness and image are impressed. In Thy Church Thou hast showed forth unto the principalities and powers of heaven Thy manifold wisdom and the excellency of Thy goodness.

And now, O my GOD, fain would I behold the wondrous things of Thy law. I would discern the glories of Thy kingdom—I would gaze with angels on all Thy treasures of wisdom and knowledge—I would be enraptured with Thine unutterable beauty—I would look on the majesty of Thy countenance which is the bliss of all the hosts of heaven.

I would see Thee shining in my heart with “the light of the knowledge of Thy glory, in the face of JESUS CHRIST,”¹ but it is very dark, mine eyes are dim, the mists of that world which is between me and Thee cover them—I am as one blind.

Thy voice also, O my GOD, is “mighty in operation, Thy voice is a glorious voice.”² Thou speakest everywhere—In the motions of heaven and earth, in the flight of years, in the course of seasons, in the vast mechanism of the universe, in the records of history, in the growth and decay of kingdoms, in the murmur of fountains, the song of a bird, the whisper of a leaf. In the sufferings and triumphs of Thy Church, in the sins and judgments of the wicked, in the trials and the patience of Thy saints, in the sacred round of solemn

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

² Psalm xlix. 4.

festivals, in the sabbath quiet of Thy days, in holy liturgies and psalms, by the voices of Thy priesthood, Thou speakest and ceasest not.

In Thy holy Word, in type and antitype, prophecy and fulfilment, law and gospel, by invitation and rebuke, by mercy and by warning, by promise and by threat, Thou makest Thy voice to sound more clearly in our ears.

And conscience within us re-echoes all these Thy voices. In our own hearts Thou hast set Thy oracle.

And I would hear Thee saying unto me, "Be strong and of a good courage,"¹ "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."²

I would hear Thee crying, "Fear not! I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,"³ or whispering unto my soul, "I am thy salvation,"⁴ "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."⁵

But mine ears are very deaf. The turmoil and uproar, the flattery and the boastings of that world which spreads before me swell up all round about me; too often as in strains of a sweet deceiving music. Thy still small voice is scarcely discernible. Thine oracle within me seems mute.

¹ Deut. xxxi. 6.

² Josh. i. 9.

³ Gen. xv. 1.

⁴ Ps. xxxv. 3.

⁵ Is. xlii. 1, 2.

To other strains our souls are set ;
A giddy whirl of sin
Fills ear and brain, and will not let
Heaven's harmonies come in.¹

"All things," saith the psalmist, "praise Thee."
"Every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I," saith Thine apostle, "saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."² Thou art sitting now, as from the beginning so unto the end, upon Thy throne. And Thou, O Lamb, didst die for me ; and Thou hast baptized me with Thy blood ; and Thou hast made me, even me the chiefest of sinners, "bone of Thy bones, and flesh of Thy flesh."³ Thou hast opened to me by Thy blood the holiest place of all. Thou hast purchased for me by death a title to partake in Thy eternal life, even in Thy own "divine nature."⁴ Why then cannot I join in the outcry of the universe ? why must the dumb creatures, yea the very "frost and snow,"⁵ be mightier and more musical in Thy praise than I ? Yea Thou, O LORD, art coming, and "Thy reward is with Thee and Thy work before Thee." For that coming all the souls of Thine elect cry out under Thy throne, and cease not—for that coming all Thy saints militant upon earth (as even they who had the first fruits of the Spirit testify,) groan with intense and unceasing desire. The "whole

¹ Christian Year.
Pet. i. 4.

² Rev. v. 13.
³ See Psalm cxlviii.

⁴ Eph. v. 30.

creation together groaneth and travaileth in pain,"¹ until Thou shalt come to relieve it and renew it.

I alone, it seems, am silent in praise and in prayer. My lips, O my God! are dumb. What shall I say unto Thee? Would I not answer Thee, "Speak, LORD; for Thy servant heareth:"² "Draw me, we will run after Thee:"³ "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee."⁴ Would I not command myself and cry, "Praise the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name?"⁵ Would I not join in that groan of holy desire exclaiming, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O GOD: my soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living GOD: when shall I come and appear in the presence of my GOD?"⁶ But the words seem to die in my heart: how shall I speak to Thee?

And whensoever, O LORD, Thou hast opened mine eyes a little; when in my youthful devotions, or in the sweet converse of godly friends or parents, or in the lonely walk amid the beauties of Thy creation, or in the secret and prayerful study of Thy word, glimpses of Thy glory have broken upon me, and my heart has heard Thee discoursing with me of eternal things, and my lips have breathed out mingled sighings and praises, and I have yearned to arise and follow Thee; how soon has the fervour of devotion died away! how speedily has the darkness rolled back over my

¹ Rom. viii. 22.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

² 1 Sam. iii. 10.

⁵ Ps. ciii. 1.

³ Cant. i. 4.

⁶ Ps. xiii.

head! how shortly have my ears grown tired of hearing Thy speech! how quickly has my tongue grown weary of its complaints and thanksgivings! how immediately have I stumbled in my pursuit of Thee! how languidly do my uncertain footsteps bear me! I “reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and am at my wits’ end.”¹

O Thou eternal and unchangeable God! I need strength—strength to see—strength to hear—strength to speak—strength to walk—strength to run.

“O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”² who shall draw me out of this grave, which is ready to shut its mouth upon me?

There is one who cometh and the “banner over Him is love.”³

“Love is strong as death; jealousy, [zeal,] cruel as the grave, many waters cannot quench it.”⁴

LORD! I need that love—I need that zeal—I need that fire—which the many waters cannot extinguish. Thou knowest my weakness: it is time the fire were kindled.

II. Again, O my God! I commune with myself. I am growing up. I am about to enter into the world. I must pass through it, before I reach Thy presence. And now the time is come, I must go forth upon my pilgrimage.

As one who from the top of a high tower looks out, when the morning is breaking on some huge city beneath him, its broad streets, its narrow

¹ Psalm cvii. 27.

³ Cant. ii. 4.

² Romans vii. 24.

⁴ Cant. viii. 6, 7.

alleys, its crowded thoroughfares ; so in the dawning of my reason, and in the illumination of Thy word, I look forth upon the world.

I see a multitude, a vast, hurrying, countless multitude. Far away in the east are the morning splendours, the dawn of the everlasting day, the advancing rays of the Sun of Righteousness not yet risen upon the earth.

And now I look again upon that great multitude. O LORD ! they are in name Thine. They profess Thy sacred truth. Thou didst array all of them in Thy robe. Thou didst wash them all in Thy blood. Thou didst gift them all with Thy Spirit. Thou gavest them Thy shield. Thou didst put the sword of Thy word into their hands. Thou didst mark them all with Thy cross upon their foreheads. Thou didst command them to confess Thee before men. Thou didst turn all their faces toward that bright dawning, and bid them wait and watch for the rising of the Sun, yea, hasten without ceasing for Thy coming.

Now I look on them more closely in the teaching of Thy word. Behold they divide into two parties.

Many of them, most of them, almost all of them, it seems, have turned, or are turning away their faces from the east. They have ceased to hasten toward the Sunrising—they have stopped—they have changed their course—they have reverted toward the west—toward the realms of night and darkness. They stand therefore in their own light—they are “fixed in their own shadow”¹—they stain and defile their robes—they lay them

¹ S. Aug.

aside in disgust—they plunge into the vanities of life, or into sinful pleasures—they resist, they grieve Thy Spirit; many of them have quenched Him—they cast Thy sword out of their hands—they fling down their shields—they can no longer conquer; and now they cannot even oppose their enemies. Thy mark upon their foreheads fades away; in some it is even blotted out—the “leprosy is coming up”¹ instead—they confess Thee not, but deny Thee before men, if not in words, yet in works. Impenitence is rising upon their brows.

All these are hurrying westward, toward the realm of darkness, the kingdom of death. Some rush more hastily than others: some sweep on undauntedly: some tremble and shake: some linger and hesitate in appearance: some advance evenly and pleasantly: some tumble and shudder, and waver to and fro: yet all hurry apace. There is no rest or respite.

The hoary sinner is there. The middle-aged worldling is there. The gay youth of pleasure is there. The disobedient child is there. There are rich and poor, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant, great and small.

The shadows are stretching over all; ever darker and thicker as they advance. The foremost “stumble upon the dark mountains.”² Behold they plunge into the rayless and starless eternity beyond; and their room is immediately filled up, their places supplied in an instant by those who follow behind them. O my SAVIOUR, what a great, vast multitude!

¹ See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

² See Jer. xlii. 16.

Few and scattered at first sight I behold the other party: scarcely, and with great difficulty, can I yet distinguish them. Now I discern them better: they stand not in their own light. They are indeed often staining but then they are ever washing anew their robes. They are often resisting for awhile the Spirit which moves them; but soon they give up their opposition, and are drawn on by it once more. They are hardly beset, and fiery temptations rain on them, but they cover themselves carefully with their shield. Many enemies come against them; but the sword of GOD is in their hands: they smite them, they slay them with the holy Word.

This one character however is the clearest. Thy mark, Thy Cross, is upon their foreheads, and they are turned toward the light, yes, their faces are all toward the sun-rising: they are waiting, they are watching for it, and now they learn to haste toward it.

“For even the youths shall faint, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”¹

I behold, O my SAVIOUR, that they are “in the world, yet not of it”—that they are taken out of the same mass of which that great multitude is formed—but how changed.

Some also, I perceive, hasten eastward from the first. These turn away from the huge, worldly crowd at my present hour of life, even in their youth. Some few are arrested by sorrow and af-

¹ Isaiah xl. 30, 31.

fictions, by the mighty hand of a most merciful God, and break away from the throng in after years; but wheresoever they are, and at whatsoever time they turn toward the light, and walk in the light, and hasten toward that bright sun-rising, I perceive that they go directly contrary to the great world's way. I see also that they give up its friendship.

They have to force their way through that vast, hurrying crowd; for they are journeying in the opposite direction. They interfere with its progress: they startle it: they testify against it: they join not in its pleasures, in its vanities: they disturb its visionary security: they jostle against their neighbours, often against friends and relations: they are made "foes to their own household."¹

The world upbraids them as singular; mocks them as enthusiasts; laughs at their self-denials and sorrows; doubts and disbelieves their joys: sometimes it rudely sweeps against them to drive them back: sometimes its children join hand in hand to prevent their onward advance: sometimes by the hands of those who are near and dear, it catches hold of the pilgrim's garments, and with soft allurements and enticements, persuades him to join company with it.

But it may not be. At whatsoever cost, at whatsoever loss, or pain, or risk, those few children of the light must force their way onward; must push through that great thronging crowd, though at the cost of their right hand, or foot, or eye; though over the dearest connections and affections; though through the midst of a

¹ S. Matt. x. 36.

thousand mockeries or reproaches, still they must hasten on. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."¹

They have to confess Thee, O crucified SAVIOUR! before men; and this they must do daily in works, if not in words, if they are hasting to Thy coming.

Thus I behold them, and as I look on them I perceive that they are not so few and scattered as I conceived.

I discern that they are of "one body and one Spirit;" I discern that they are called with "one hope of their calling;" I discern that they have "one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, one GOD and FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in them all."²

For wheresoever they are "the eyes of the LORD are over"³ them. Their faces are toward the light; the splendours of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them and through them, dimly perhaps at first, but brighter and brighter as they advance toward it.

Amidst these glittering sunbeams, though not yet risen upon the earth, they know that the LORD, the Fountain of that great glory, is standing, holding the crowns of life in His hands. A moment, and He will appear; and the crown shall shine upon their foreheads, even with the light which shall never go down any more. Then where will be that vast multitude through which they must thus violently force their way?

O Thou, whose throne upon earth was the cross;

¹ S. Matt. xi. 12.

² Eph. iv. 4—6.

³ 1 S. Pet. iii. 4.

Thou Who wast in the world, yet not of it ; whom the world hated because Thou testifiedst against it, that its deeds were evil ; Whom it crucified, because Thou wouldst save it ; to which of these parties must I attach myself ?

If I would join myself to Thy followers, do I not need that holy violence by which they burst through that great crowd, and take Thy kingdom by storm ? Whence do they gain that marvellous courage, that great strength ? Whence do those weeping penitents, those hoary sages, those fair youths, and delicate maidens, and tender children, derive that unshrinking hardihood, that irresistible power ? Whence is it that "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, they shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life ?"¹

The fire is in them, O God, Thou "consuming fire ;" the fire "strong as death, cruel as the grave," which many waters cannot quench, even the fire of love and zeal ; the fire wherewith Thou burnedst, O JESUS, when Thou descendedst from the FATHER'S bosom to lay down Thy life for the world, and to be crucified for sinners.

From Thy fire Thou hast lit their fires. Thence they have that fiery courage, that irresistible strength. This it is which burns in them. This it is which shines out from them. This it is which thus sweeps them onward through the world, hasting toward Thy appearing. This it is which enables them, in spite of opposition, contradiction, temptation, seduction, affection, mockery, thus to confess Thee before the world.

¹ Philip. ii. 15, 16.

LORD, I shrink from an unkind look. I fear a reproachful word. I tremble at a sinner's sneer. I hearken to every tempting companion. I love ease and not hardship. I cannot bear to be singular. A whisper of love, a tear of affection, unmans me. Even the mockery of any scoffer affrights me.

O Thou crucified Redeemer! How shall I join Thy camp? How be numbered amidst Thy soldiers? How "hold fast that I have, that no man take my crown?" How shine with Thy light? How hasten toward Thy coming? How force my violent way through that jostling, contradicting, innumerable throng, which sweeps daily, and hourly, and unceasingly against Thy followers.

Do I not need that zeal, that love? Am I not lukewarm, cold, feeble, faint-hearted? O I need that fire, that consuming, irresistible fire. I need that great, unwearied strength, which that heaven-lit flame only can give me. I am entering into the midst of that world; soon will its many waters pour against me; soon will its floods sweep over me: they cannot quench that fire. LORD! it is time that it were kindled.

MEDITATION II.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD.

I am He who "baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST and with fire; whose fan is in My hand, and I will thoroughly purge My floor, and will gather My wheat into My garner; but the chaff I will burn with unquenchable fire."¹ The one fire is My love; the other is My wrath. Thou wouldest have that fire which the many waters of the world's course cannot quench; that thou mayest escape the other fire which the many tears of eternity cannot quench or allay in the least. I am He who baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST and with fire. **CONSIDER AND UNDERSTAND!**

I have ordained that "now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places shall be known by My church My manifold wisdom."²

Wherein shall it thus be known? In manifesting My righteousness upon all Mine enemies, and in supplying every want of all My faithful servants.

By the first ordinance of My church—by one of My two great Sacraments, I baptized thee erewhile with My HOLY SPIRIT, sowing in thee thereby the seed of eternal life, grafting thee as a branch into Myself—the Vine, and incorporating thee as a member into My holy Body.

Then, when I washed thee with My blood, and robed thee with Myself, and consecrated thee with My HOLY SPIRIT, and marked thee upon the fore-

¹ S. Luke iii. 16, 17.

² Eph. iii. 10.

head with My cross, thy parents in God pronounced for thee the solemn threefold vow, binding thee as My soldier to the glorious warfare of salvation, and engaging thee to confess Me amongst My white-robed armies.

Then also over thy head, yet nestling in its mother's bosom, rose up the earnest threefold prayer;—

“O Merciful God! grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him!”

“Grant that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him!”

“Grant that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh!”¹

And now thou art growing up; now, “by reason of use thy senses are becoming exercised to discern between good and evil.”

Now also the flesh, with its passions, desires, and affections, is waxing mighty within thee; and thou must go forth to meet the heady torrent of this world's vehement course; and thou must enter Satan's kingdom, to “wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”²

Now also ensues thy time to confess Me before men. O My beloved! shall I send thee forth into this warfare unarmed, unsanctified, unblest, unstrengthened? Shall I not hear the devout prayers

¹ Baptismal Service.

² Eph. vi. 12.

of the Church, thy mother and My spouse, that I, the New Man, may be formed in thee—that thy flesh may die, and My Spirit live and grow in thee—that thou mayest have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh? Thou criest unto Me that thou art weak, that thine eyes are blind, thine ears deaf, thy lips dumb, thy feet lame, thy knees feeble, in all the things belonging to the Spirit. Thou weepest before Me, saying, that thou shrinkest from the burden of My cross, that My shield and sword are heavy for thee, that thou tremblest at a light laugh, a rough word, an unkind look; thou tellest Me that thy heart is cold; it is as thou hast said, O My beloved, but “I am He Who baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST and with fire.”

Having baptized thee with My HOLY SPIRIT to regenerate thee, is it not time that I should baptize thee with My fire; I who have “begun a good work in thee, can I not finish unto Mine own day?”¹ My Baptism is but one, but it is time that I should complete it for thee. I set the spark of eternal life within thee, now it is time that I should fan it into a flame. I came to dwell in thee as the Quickening Spirit; is it not time that I should burn in thee as love? This is what thou needest, this is what thou criest for: for love is strong as death, jealousy cruel [hard] as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame: many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it. Consider, therefore, and understand.

¹ Philip. i. 6.

I have appointed in My Church, through My holy Apostles, a second sacred ordinance—the rite of Confirmation.

I have one Baptism alone, but Confirmation is in every way the complement and filling up of that Baptism. Is not to *confirm*, to establish, to make strong? I will now make strong My part in holy Baptism, and thou also shalt make thine strong. Thus, O My servant, in My Church do I supply thine every want.

I will hold for thee the solemn assembly, I will gather together the great congregation. In the person of My chief minister, the Bishop of My Church, will I be there.

By his lips will I question thee, if now, having thy reason exercised to discern between good and evil, thou in thine own person and by thine own resolution renewest, (as thou art bound to do,) and ratifiest and confirmest those solemn baptismal engagements into which thou at the first didst enter.

Then shalt thou on thy part confirm, establish, and make strong, thy holy and blessed purposes and resolves; then shalt thou confirm, establish, and make strong, thy good confession before many witnesses.

O blessed confirmation of a blessed determination! O blessed confirmation of a blessed confession! How often in hours of trial and temptation; how often when, under the burden and bruising of the Cross, “the whole head seems sick, and the whole heart faint;”¹ how often when weary and

¹ Isaiah i. 5.

worn with forcing thy onward way through the opposing and tormenting worldly multitude ; how often, in days of dimness and anguish, when laid, it may be, (as the Psalmist,) in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness and in the deep, shall its memory break upon thee as a star, revive thee as dew, encourage thee as with the voice of the living God, cry aloud as it were to everything around thee, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees:" and, "say unto him that is of fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you."

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."¹

And when, O My beloved, thou hast by My grace thus confirmed, established, and made strong, thy part of the holy, everlasting covenant, it may not be that I should fail thee.

Hark, how the prayer arises over thee, once regenerated by water and the HOLY GHOST, and gifted with the forgiveness of sins—"Strengthen this Thy servant, we beseech Thee, with the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, and increase in him daily Thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill him with the spirit of Thy holy fear."

Are not these the seven lamps of fire which the

¹ Isaiah xxxv. 3—6

Apostle beheld burning before the throne of God? Shall not this sevenfold operation of His most HOLY SPIRIT strengthen thee, enable thy eyes to see, thy ears to hear, thy lips to speak, yea to sing in the ways of the LORD, that great is the glory of the LORD? Shall it not enable thee to run the way of GOD's commandments, to break through all opposition, to overcome every enemy, to be more than a conqueror through Him Who loved thee?

Behold when that prayer rises up, do I not receive it, do I not perfume it with My prevailing intercession, do I not offer it before that throne of grace? Fear not. Only believe, and it shall be answered.

I have made thee with all My saints My temple upon earth, and the sevenfold lamp shall be kindled within thee. From those glorious burning flames which shine for ever in My temple in heaven, I will light My love in thy heart: many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it. It shall be "salvation in the midst of thee, and a wall of fire round about thee."¹ And if thou art possessed with My love, if it increases in thee more and more, will not thine eyes be fixed, as the eyes of those who watch for the morning, upon the promise of My glorious coming? Thou wilt wait for it, thou wilt yearn for it; thou wilt haste to it; thou wilt "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset thee;"² thou wilt count everything else but dross and dung; thou wilt not consider if thou art as other men; thou wilt not

¹ Zech. ii. 5.² Heb. xii. 1.

dread to be singular ; thou wilt not tremble at rebukes and upbraidings. The mock, or the laugh, or the sneer of the worldling, will fall but like drops of water in a mighty conflagration, on thy ardent, consuming zeal : they will hiss and vanish away. Without pride, without hypocrisy, without any purpose so to do, thou shalt "confess Me before men."¹ Thou shalt carry My Cross high, and in that sign conquer, because thou shalt first have impressed it upon thy heart.

Behold the prayer is gone up ; it is offered before the throne.

Thou kneelest, thou bowest down thine head ; knowest thou for whose hand it waits ? Thou seest before thee an earthen vessel, a man of like passions with thyself. But I have set My grace in earthen vessels. It is My minister, the bishop and pastor of My Church. Of himself he can do nothing.

"I am He that baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST and with fire."² It is My hand that shall be laid upon thee : My blessing which shall fall on thee : he is My ambassador. He stands in My place. Only believe, and heaven opens : I reach down My hand ; the Spirit falls, and the fire is kindled.

Was it not so in the beginning ? My evangelist preached, Samaritans believed ; he baptized them, they were forgiven and regenerate. But forthwith My holy apostles, the bishops of My Church came ; they prayed, they laid their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST. But from whence ? From heaven only. It was the gift of God.

¹ S. Matt. x. 32.

² S. Luke iii. 16.

Those gifts I alone purchased. I bought them for men with My blood. I hold them in My hand. I give them to whom I will. Kneel then and receive them; bow down thine head and be blessed.

Now, therefore, thou hast confirmed and made strong thy part in the holy covenant of the Gospel. I also have confirmed and made Mine strong.

The foundation is laid, yea it is made strong. Now, "hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown."¹ Be strong, yea be strong.

For remember it is yet but the foundation which is laid, the foundation which is confirmed, established, and made strong.

Thou must edify thyself in thy most holy faith. "Leaving the principles of My doctrine, thou must go on unto perfection." Thou must on this strong foundation rear up the whole glorious temple of holiness.

For "which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish."²

Thou hast counted up the cost, thou hast begun the work; even at this instant thou hast confirmed the foundation. Now, therefore, carry on the work.

Had Adam never fallen, had man never sinned, then like My first temple in Jerusalem, without axes and hammers, in silence, and glory, and ma-

¹ Rev. iii. 11.

² S. Luke xiv. 23—30.

jesty, as with the natural growth of some stately palm, would My temple have been perfected within him.

But thou hast become sinful; and thou hast been carried into captivity—and though I brought thee back again and restored thee to thy good land, though I have laid thy foundation again in Jerusalem, when I established thee in My holy Church, yet thou canst not be as if thou hadst not sinned, as if thy nature were not corrupt. Thou must build with fear and trembling: tears and weeping must mingle with thy joy. Arabians, and Ammonites, and Ashdodites, enemies of every kind and on every side, will conspire against thee. Some will come against thee with arms and violence; some will mock and scoff at thee. Thou must watch day and night: thou must hold the sword and spear as thou buildest. Thou must cast out of thine own heart those strange women, those false, worldly desires with which thou hast made affinity. The axe and the hammer of God's holy word must hew and shape thy deeds, and words, and thoughts, with pain, and labour, and much confusion, before they are meet to be laid on the sacred and pure foundation.

Therefore, thou must be "strong and of good courage"—thou must make no truce with thine enemies—thou must not hearken to their enticements—neither must thou shrink from their mockery—neither must thou fear their threats. Only strengthen thyself to build. What, if when thou castest thine eyes into thy heart, the house of God there seem to thee as nothing!

“ Yet now be strong, saith the LORD, and work : for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts. Yet once, it is a little while, and the desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts,”¹ even the “ peace which passeth all understanding.”²

Behold then, My beloved. In My holy Church I have ordained a full supply for all thy wants.

In this solemn ordinance of Confirmation, I have strengthened for thee, and thou hast strengthened before Me, the good foundation of eternal life.

Yes, it is now established and confirmed. CHRIST crucified is now fixed, by thy own resolve, in thy heart, by thy own confession, in thy life. I am the one foundation.

Henceforth amidst all those trials, amidst the unceasing warfare of life thou must build up, day and night, in heart and life, the glorious temple of My holiness : and thou must strengthen thy hands to build.

See, for the continual strengthening and refreshing of thy soul, I have appointed in My Church My second great sacrament, even the communion of My own Body and Blood.

There, before My altar, thou acknowledgest thy need of Me ; thou ownest thy sinfulness, thy weakness, thy helplessness ; thou declarest that without Me thou canst do nothing. There thou renewest,

¹ Haggai ii. 4, 9.

² Philip. iv. 7.

in the face of the congregation, thy good confession of a crucified Redeemer.

There thou, by the remembrance of Me, and of My death for thee, rekindlest and fannest up into sevenfold fervency thy love for Me, and for thy brethren in Me.

There thou purgest away continually the sins of daily occurrence, which thou contractest in thy passage through this sinful and naughty world.

There thou eatest that flesh which is meat indeed, and drinkest that blood which is drink indeed.

There thou eatest and drinkest strength : and in the strength of that meat, though enemies scoff, though Satan harasses, though the world vexes, though sleep flees from thine eyes, though thou must hold, as it were, in one hand the sword of God and shield of faith,¹ while with the other thou buildest, thou shalt carry on, thou shalt advance, thou shalt accomplish the good work. The temple of God shall be perfected within thee. And mourn not that it is not so bright and majestic as it might have been.

“He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.”²

Behold the great glory of the regenerate, living heart, of the Jerusalem, the vision of peace within thee ; “I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be glory in the midst of her!”³ I even I, the brightness of the FATHER’S glory and the express image of His person, will camp round about thee and will inhabit within thee!

¹ See Neh. iv.

² S. John vi. 56.

³ Zech. ii. 5.

Yea, "If a man will love Me, he will keep My words; and My FATHER will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."¹

What needest thou more, or what canst thou have more? By the Eternal Spirit, through which thou partakest in My Body and Blood, I and the FATHER will come unto thee, to dwell in thee. Thou shalt be a temple of the undivided and co-eternal TRINITY. What more glory can I give to heaven, or to the heaven of heavens? Tell me and I will give it thee.

Be these then thy three purposes as thou comest to My confirmation:—First, to be strong in Me; secondly, to confess Me; thirdly, to partake henceforth continually of that blessed Communion; ever waiting and watching for My coming, and hasting to it with all thy heart, and soul, and strength. So I, Who have begun a good work in thee, will perform it unto that My day: and when I, "the Sun of Righteousness, arise with healing in My wings"² thou also "shalt shine forth as the sun,"³ in the kingdom of My FATHER and thy FATHER, My GOD and thy GOD. Through that Spirit which I now pour on thee, will I then raise thee from the dead. By and in that Spirit of everlasting glory, thou shalt awake up in My likeness and be satisfied with it.

So be it, O LORD! Amen.

Come, HOLY GHOST, our hearts inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire;
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart;

¹ S. John xiv. 23.

² Mal. iv. 2.

³ S. Matt. xiii. 43.

Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love ;
Enable with perpetual light
The darkness of our blinded sight ;
Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace ;
Keep far our foes, give peace at home—
Where Thou art guide no ills can come ;
Teach us to know the FATHER, SON,
And Thee of both to be but One ;
That through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song,
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. Amen.

MEDITATION III.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

"Thy sheep hear Thy voice."¹ Thou hast spoken, O Thou Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. I called upon Thee, and Thou hast answered me out of Thy Holy Word. I told Thee my wants, and Thou hast showed me the supply of them, "for with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light shall we see light."²

"Blessed," Thou sayest unto Thy disciples, "are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."³

They had but the shadows of the images of heavenly things; we, their very image. O teach me to look through things temporal, that I may discern in them things eternal. Let me consider the living image, that I may penetrate onward to the living truth.

Thou wast the living Image of the FATHER when Thou wast manifest in the flesh; the living and life-giving Image; for "as the FATHER hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the SON to have life in Himself;"⁴ and as the living FATHER,

¹ S. John x. 27.

³ S. Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

² Psalm xxxvi. 9.

⁴ S. John v. 26.

so Thou also, His SON, quickenest whom Thou wilt.

Now also the ordinances of Thy Church are no longer dead rudiments. They are images of heavenly things, living and life-giving, if only there be faith in those who use them.

Let me, therefore, consider this Thy Ordinance of Confirmation. First, let me behold the Image, the life which is in it, and the life it gives. Then let me look a little farther to the heavenly truth of which it is the image. For "now we see through a glass darkly,"¹ we see the truth but reflected in a mirror, and in a riddle or mystery: but then shall we see "face to face;"² then shall we behold the truth itself, openly, nakedly, manifestly. LORD, open mine eyes that I may see.

I shall enter Thy holy Church. I shall stand as Thy child among the candidates for Thy blessing. I shall with my brethren be seeking for the confirmation of all my Christian privileges.

Around me will be the great congregation of Thy Saints, of those who have already reached the full possession of all those blessed privileges.

Thy ministers who have been the dispensers to us of Thy gifts, who have instructed us, assisted us, strengthened us, encouraged us with Thy Word and with Thy promises, will be with us, conducting us towards Thy holy altar.

Thy chief pastor and bishop will be there, as Thy representative—he will pray for us, he will lay his hands upon us, as we kneel and bow before him, to Confirm us. Thus shall I confess Thee

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² Ibid.

before men. This is the image, O my soul! and, if thou art faithful, an image living and life-giving, gifting thee with the health and strength which thou needest, and ratifying for thee all thy past endowments, and admitting thee to the full possession of all the blessings of the Church of God; opening the way for thee to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to the holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the REDEEMER.

Without thou wilt have left the vain busy world, pursuing its wonted dissolute course, regardless of the LORD, His blessing, and His coming.

Behold, I say, the image! What is the truth which it reflects, which it projects over thee, O my soul?

O LORD, at Thy coming there will be candidates for Thy salvation. They will be watching, they will be hasting for Thy Advent. They will be groaning, they will be yearning, they will be praying for Thee to come and confirm them in the full possession of all their Christian privileges; to bless them with the blessings of eternal glory; to endow them for ever with those good things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee."¹

And Thou wilt come! As they wait for Thee in Thy holy Church, Thou wilt come and open the gates of the dwelling of Thy glory; Thy holy Church eternal in the heavens.

Around them they shall see the great congregation of Thy Saints, all Thine elect who have

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

departed unto Thee; for those who "sleep in Thee Thou shalt bring with Thee."¹

And Thine angels, Thy ministering spirits, whom Thou continually "sendest forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation,"² to instruct, to assist, to strengthen, to encourage them, to keep them in all their ways, to dispense unto them Thy gifts, these shall then gather and conduct them unto Thee, these shall present them unto Thee, where Thou standest beside the everlasting mercy-seat, that Thou, Who hast ever prayed for them that their faith fail not, mayest, as they kneel and bow before Thee, lay Thine holy hands upon them, and give them Thy last best blessing, and confirm them, for ever and ever, in the full possession of all the riches of Thine inheritance.

Then shall they enter into Thine Own immortality, and life, and glory, and joy; then shall they with all Thy saints and angels, with prophets, apostles, martyrs, cherubim and seraphim, sit down with Thee in Thy FATHER'S House, at Thy marriage supper, for ever and ever, to eat the new bread of everlasting health, to drink the new wine of everlasting gladness, to feed on Thee Who art the bliss of heaven, through all the endless ages of eternity, when Thou as their head, the eldest brother of that happy family, shalt be subject unto Him that hath put all things under Thee; that Thou, in Thy divinity, with the Eternal FATHER and the Eternal SPIRIT, Three Persons and One GOD, mayest be "all in all."

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

² Heb. i. 14.

Without, O my God, will be the world, the world of condemned sinners, of those who were not waiting for Thy coming, of those who despised their birthright and who, therefore, forfeited Thy blessing, and with it their birthright. Then in that hour they would have it, they would recover what they have lost ; but it may not be ; " From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath,"—it is too late—the gates are shut. They call in vain ; their carcasses must strew the flaming waves of Thy indignation ; the lake of fire receives them ; the outer darkness covers them ; the pit of hell shuts its mouth upon them ; the second death entombs them, and there is no future resurrection. Behold, O my soul, the truth. Be it never absent from thy memory.

The fire of God is soon to fall,
Thou know'st it, on this earthly ball ;
Full many a soul, the price of blood,
Mark'd by the Almighty's hand for good,
To utter death that hour shall sweep—
And will the saints of heaven dare weep ?

Then in His wrath shall God uproot
The trees He set, for lack of fruit ;
And drown in rude tempestuous blaze
The towers His hand had deigned to raise ;
In silence, ere that storm begin,
Count o'er His mercies and thy sin.

Pray only that thine aching heart,
From visions vain content to part,
Strong for love's sake its woe to hide,
May cheerful wait the Cross beside,
Too happy if, that dreadful day,
Thy life be given thee for a prey.

Snatch'd sudden from the avenging rod,
 Safe in the bosom of thy God,
 How wilt thou then look back, and smile
 On thoughts that bitterest seemed erewhile,
 And bless the pangs that made thee see,
 This was no world of rest for thee !¹

Psalms preparatory for Confirmation.

Psalm	cxix.	Self-examination.
„	xxxix.	A pilgrim spirit.
„	xv.	Purity.
„	li.	Penitence.
„	xviii.	Strength.
„	xix.	Cleansing grace.
„	xxiii.	The good Shepherd.

Psalms subsequent to Confirmation.

Psalm	ciii.	Praise.
„	xxvii.	Trust in GOD.
„	xxxiv.	Plenty of GOD's house.
„	xxiv.	Seeking CHRIST.
„	xl.	Waiting for CHRIST.
„	lxxxiv.	Longing for CHRIST.
„	xc.	Security of GOD's servants.

¹ Christian Year.

*A short form of self-examination before
Confirmation.*

"Examine me, O LORD, and prove me. Try out my reins and my heart." Psalm xxvi. 2.

1. Do I know and dread my own weakness?
2. Am I sure of CHRIST's strength?
3. Am I resolved to confess CHRIST; not to dread unkindness, or ridicule, or the appearance of singularity?
4. Do I pray morning, noon, and night, and that fervently?
5. Do I examine myself before I pray?
6. Do I read GOD's word every day? Do I try to remember and obey it?
7. Do I keep GOD's day holy?
8. Do I reverence every thing that belongs to Him?
9. Do I honour and obey His ministers in all their godly admonitions?
10. Do I regularly set apart some of my means for charity? Do I deny myself all I can, even in food and dress, for this object?
11. Do I make the best use of my time?
12. Am I sober, honest, just, truth speaking, chaste, kind, gentle, forgiving, stedfast, devout?
13. Do I carefully subdue my temper?
14. Do I keep strict watch on my words?
15. Do I note my sins every day? Do I always confess them?
16. Do I amend my faults directly I perceive them?

17. Am I patient in difficulties and spiritual trials?

18. Do I really long for CHRIST's coming?

19. Am I prepared to die?

20. Do I seriously intend to be from this hour a regular communicant?

21. Do I keep my good resolutions?

"O cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."¹ Amen.

¹ Psalm xix. 12, 13.

